

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD**

**MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2007**

**3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II**

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:08 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Spraul-Schmidt, Raser, Sullebarger, Chatterjee, Young and Kreider present. Absent: Senhauser and Wallace.

### **MINUTES**

The Historic Conservation Board unanimously approved the minutes of the May 21, 2007 (motion by Chatterjee, second by Raser) as amended.

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 2726 CLEINVIEW AVENUE, CLEINVIEW-HACKBERRY HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on the construction of a new driveway and the reorientation of an existing garage. She explained that the house was originally used as a parsonage on the adjacent church property to the north, but the house had been separately deeded. The concrete block garage at the rear and part of 2726 Cleinview was accessed by a common driveway on the church lot. The applicant proposes to locate the driveway to the south of the house and relocate the entry to the garage from the north to the west facade. Ms. Kellam stated that the proposed driveway construction, garage alterations and associated landscaping meet the guidelines for the historic district and are compatible and appropriate in the historic district.

### **BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Sullebarger) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct the new driveway, revise the garage and plant new hedges and bushes as proposed with the condition that final plans and any revisions be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a building permit.

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, DD REVIEW & ZONING VARIANCES, CENTRAL PARKWAY, ELM, RACE, AND 12<sup>TH</sup> STREETS, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

*[Mr. Young recused himself from discussion and vote on this item]*

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on the construction of a new K-12 Performing Arts School on the block bounded by Central Parkway, 12<sup>th</sup>, Race and Elm Streets. She stated that on October 23, 2006 the Board reviewed and approved a Certificate of Appropriateness and the necessary Zoning Variances for the project. Ms. Cowden noted that there were a number of conditions placed on the COA approval. Cincinnati Public Schools has value engineered the project and modifications of the approved design are required to bring the project back on budget. The proposed design modifications represent \$2.1 million in savings.

Ms. Cowden explained that design changes include the deletion or shortening of various overhangs, parapet walls and elements that impact each elevation of the school. The ticket booth/light cannon will be removed from the Central Parkway façade for an estimated savings of \$200,000. The marquee over the 12<sup>th</sup> Street entrance has been raised to approximately the second story level to create a more prominent entry from 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Washington Park. Some strip windows on the academic wing were changed to individual punched openings.

A second sign, a vinyl cutout of the SCPA logo, will be installed on the inside face of the transom above the 12<sup>th</sup> Street entrance. Ms. Cowden explained that the SCPA logo has been changed from the masks of comedy and tragedy to a graphic interpretation of the school's initials. She pointed out

that the entrance will have cast aluminum letters spelling out “SCPA” mounted above the doorway. Two signs with the same text was redundant but staff indicated the transom might contain the masks of comedy and tragedy from SCPA’s previous logo or another, similar design.

The L.E.D. marquee sign above the theater’s Central Parkway lobby has been deleted from the project. The October 23<sup>rd</sup> staff report indicated that a supergraphic “theater” sign would be etched into the glass wall at the corner of Central Parkway and Elm. Instead, opaque vinyl letters will be applied to the interior of the glass to give the visual impression of frosted or etched glass. The cast aluminum letters of a wall sign reading “SCHOOL FOR CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS” on the Central Parkway façade will now be backlit with blue L.E.D. lighting.

Additional landscaping, in particular a tree line along 12<sup>th</sup> Street, is proposed to shield the parking lot and to visually connect the new SCPA facility with Washington Park. The landscaping and a metal picket fence will define a more “urban” edge along 12<sup>th</sup> and Race Streets. The colored, patterned sidewalks have been deleted from the proposal due to objections from the City’s Department of Transportation and Engineering. Finally, the statuary on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Parkway elevations will be bid separately and installed only if the budget permits.

Ms. Cowden concluded that overall the design has been somewhat diminished by the proposed modifications, but the project as revised complies with the Over-the-Rhine Historic District conservation guidelines and staff recommends that the Board approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with some conditions.

Ms. Cowden confirmed for Mr. Kreider that the building footprint had not changed.

David Crafts, Project Representative for the Greater Cincinnati Arts and Education Center, stated that his organization was contributing \$31 million of the project \$72 million cost of the facility. He said that state funding covers standard educational items, but non-standard items such as the dance studio and theater must have private funding. He explained that he felt that the outside ticket booth would not be used enough to warrant the expense.

Thomas Klinedinst, Jr., Chairman of Greater Cincinnati Arts and Education, stated that his organization currently had \$24 million in pledges and donations of \$31 million required. He stated that any delays in the project could jeopardize pledges and would have a negative impact on costs.

Project Manager, Jeff Dodge, stated that some of the aesthetics were trimmed, but that the overall design was not compromised. He said that a substantial amount of the budget cuts were interior items. In response to Mr. Chatterjee, Mr. Dodge said that shortening the cantilevered projections reduced the steel cost. Mr. Chatterjee commended the changes to the Washington Street elevation.

In response to Mr. Raser, Mr. Dodge explained that the installation of the statues comes out of a different account than the bases. Mr. Raser stated that he hoped financing would allow for the statues. Mr. Chatterjee said that he felt that if the bases were built, there would be a greater chance for the eventual inclusion of the statues. Ms. Sullebarger stated that the bases would resemble bollards and help define the entries, especially from 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

In response to Mr. Chatterjee, Mr. Dodge explained that since the CPS logo changed, he agreed with staff’s recommendation that the aluminum SCPA letters above the doorway be the only sign at that entry. Mr. Kreider concurred. Mr. Raser commented that he was disappointed to see that the L.E.D. sign was eliminated.

Russ Alford, Turner Construction, stated that he felt that the construction market was beginning to soften and that possibly some of the items that were eliminated would be returned to the project.

Walter Reinhaus, President of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council, stated that the Community Council has sought to work with CPS but that CPS had not been good partners. He said that he was distressed to learn that CPS was working toward the acquisition of the buildings operated by the Drop-Inn Center as transitional housing and planned to demolish them.

In response to Mr. Reinhaus, Mike Burson of CPS stated that for the past six years CPS had made it clear that their goal was to work with the Drop-Inn Center and the community to relocate the facility. Since the issue was not yet resolved the project was designed around the buildings.

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt stated that CPS had prepared plans showing the project with and without the Drop-Inn Center buildings. However, the Board had reviewed and approved only the proposed alternative, which built around the Drop-Inn Center buildings. Mr. Kreider clarified that the proposal before the Board did not include demolition of those buildings.

Ms. Sullebarger stated that she felt the items that were changed or eliminated from the plan did not significantly diminish the design that the Board previously approved. She added that she appreciated the changes to the 12<sup>th</sup> Street façade.

The Board generally agreed that the statue bases helped to define the 12<sup>th</sup> Street façade and entry and should remain even if the statues were not financially feasible at this time.

### **BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Chatterjee) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed school, as revised and as shown in the attached drawings, finding that the design meets the Over-the-Rhine Historic District Conservation Guidelines for new construction with the following conditions:

1. Statuary, or a suitable replacement thereof, shall be installed at the Central Parkway and 12<sup>th</sup> Street entrances to the facility.
2. The vinyl applied SCPA logo shall be deleted from the 12<sup>th</sup> Street entrance.
3. Final construction drawings shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator and the Chairman of the Historic Conservation Board for review and approval prior to construction.

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, SPECIAL EXCEPTION & DD REVIEW, 31 E. COURT STREET, COURT STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Ms. Kellam presented a staff report and circulated additional photos of an ATM machine installed in the storefront of 31 E. Court Street without permits. When PNC Bank later applied for a building permit, the Department of Buildings & Inspections determined that the new work did not meet the 60% transparency required under zoning and that a variance would be required.

Although, the storefront at 31 E. Court had been altered, it did retain transparency comparable to other historic storefronts in the district. The installation of the ATM eliminated one entire storefront window and a portion of the wood panel below and reduced the glass area of the storefront from 37% to approximately 22%. In response to Mr. Raser, Mr. Forwood explained the method used to determine the percentage of transparency. Ms. Kellam indicated that the project architect Bernie Kiessling had revised the storefront design based on further discussion with staff and was present to proposed alternatives.

Mr. Kiessling, architect representing PNC Bank, apologized for proceeding with the project without a permit and Certificate of Appropriateness. He stated that the ATM installation was in the public interest because it reinforces commercial activity and conveniently serves office workers, restaurant patrons and retail customers in the area 24 hours a day.

Mr. Kiessling circulated revised drawings showing three alternative schemes designed to accommodate the ATM and to recapture some of the character of the original storefront lost to subsequent modifications. He stated that the transparency of façade had already been reduced to 37% by a solid door leading to upstairs residences unrelated to the retail use and by infilling the storefront transoms. His new designs would replace the aluminum storefront with a new wood one that would reopen the transom on the retail space and drop the sill on the display window.

In response to Ms. Sullebarger, Mr. Kiessling said the residential door and its transom were solid panels for security reasons. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt commented that the ATM seemed comparable in size to that of a drive-up and questioned whether a smaller unit might have been selected. Mr. Kiessling said that the ATM installed was the smallest size available for this application.

The Board generally agreed that if the residential door and transom were glass, scheme "C" would provide consistency with neighboring storefronts and better light the retail establishment. Mr. Kiessling estimated that if the residential entry were glass, the overall façade would be 60% transparent and the zoning variance would not be necessary.

### **BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Kreider) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. Find that this ATM installation, installed without a building permit, adversely affects the historic architectural and aesthetic integrity of the building and the district and does not meet the Court Street Historic District Guidelines.
2. Deny a COA for the completed work.
3. Approve revised proposal "C" dated June 1, 2007, by Kiessling Architecture, including a transparent four-part transom and new full glazed door in the east bay.
4. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.

### **PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 300 AND 304 MAIN STREET, THIRD & MAIN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Ms. Cowden presented a staff report on the proposed construction of a rooftop addition to the McMicken School of Design Building at 300-302 Main Street and the Anderson Building at 304-306 Main Street, contributing buildings to the Third and Main Local Historic District. She said that the district guidelines provide that all exterior changes will be reviewed, but stipulate that particular attention should be paid to significant features and changes to the primary facades facing Main and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. She distributed additional photographs to the Board.

Ms. Cowden indicated that the Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA) holds a façade easement on both buildings and is currently conducting its own review of the proposed work. CPA has not yet approved the work. Likewise, the Department of Buildings & Inspections has not yet completed a formal review of the project for its compliance with the DD Zoning District requirements.

Architect Robert Wendel of Wendel Associates, gave a brief presentation on the proposed penthouse project. He explained that the addition would expand a conference room constructed in 1968 and would provide additional offices, a workspace for a current tenant, Reynolds DeWitt. The addition will be a uniform one-story structure topping both buildings. The penthouse would be sheathed in bronze aluminum panels with tinted glass windows shielded by a continuous horizontal

sunshade. Mr. Wendel said that the penthouse will be set behind the heavy metal cornice of the McMicken School of Design and behind the gabled parapet of the Anderson Building.

Mr. Wendel said that the design was driven in part by the limitations of the existing structure. He said he had considered a reduced footprint setback from the wall plane, but the configuration was too small in area. Further, the additional structural work required was prohibitive and created drainage issues.

Mr. Chatterjee stated that the addition looked like a building on top of two buildings. He suggested the fenestration and panel division of the addition should reflect the pattern and rhythm of the existing building below. Mr. Young commented that there was a huge amount of the bronze color. Mr. Wendel responded that the windows of the buildings below are that color.

Mr. Kreider suggested that the color of the glass could be different to emphasize the vertical division or that the panel color itself could be lightened. Mr. Raser suggested that the sunscreen be louvred to reduce the visual weight of the penthouse. The Board agreed that the addition should extend the full width of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street façade in front of the elevator shaft.

The Board generally agreed that if appropriately detailed, a penthouse addition would be acceptable, but that it would like to see some different design options and samples of the exterior materials. Mr. Kreider said he understood the structural reasons for the large footprint, but warned that there could be additional unanticipated building code requirements.

**PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 1400 BLOCK OF PLEASANT STREET, CITY HOME CINCINNATI, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

*[Mr. Raser recused himself from discussion on this item]*

Ms. Cowden presented a staff report on the proposed owner-occupied, market rate, predominantly residential project called City Home Cincinnati on Pleasant Street between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets, north of Washington Park.

Four buildings - 1401-1403 Race Street and 1411, 1420 and 1422 Pleasant Street - would be rehabilitated as multi-family residences (the race Street property will have a first floor commercial space). Three contributing structures - 1406, 1408, and 1410 Pleasant Street – would be demolished and twelve new single-family residences would be constructed on those and nine vacant lots on the 1400 block of Pleasant Street. The project will seek

The area is zoned RM-1.2 (Multi-Family High-Density District). Preliminary meetings with the City indicate that several zoning variances as well as accommodations from the Department of Transportation & Engineering may be required for this project.

Ms. Cowden reminded the Board that it had reviewed the demolition of the three Pleasant Street buildings on December 22, 2003. At that time there was agreement among Board members that the small frame house at 1408 and 1410 Pleasant were severely deteriorated and that 1410 had lost its integrity due to inappropriate alterations. The applicant was encouraged however to reconsider rehabilitating the three-story brick Italianate building at 1406 Pleasant.

There are three townhome designs proposed for City Home. Each has a main block on Pleasant Street and a two-car garage on the Osborn and Comers Alleys. A connecting wing frames a private, enclosed courtyard between the two. The smallest, Type A, is two-stories with a two-story rear wing. Type B is nearly identical, with a three-story main block. In the largest unit, Type C, the main block and rear wing are both three-stories. Exteriors are brick veneer and lap siding with standing seam gable roofs vinyl windows.

Mary Burke, Over-the-Rhine Community Housing, made a brief presentation on the proposed project. Ms. Burke presented display boards and explained the plans, locations and designs. She stated that feedback from the community was favorable and that financing was being arranged.

Architect Martha Dorf, Schickel Design Company, gave an overview of the design ideas and goals. She stated that the design has a European flavor similar to the ideas of Jane Jacobs. She emphasized that each unit would have at least one pull off parking space and a small outdoor area.

Co-developer and building owner Karen Blatt emphasized that the alleys were very narrow and its width and multiple curb cuts present a challenge. She said that cutting the granite curbs and adding a brick apron would be helpful.

Mr. Chatterjee suggested a more vertical design would be more consistent with the neighborhood. He also stated that the circular windows were not appropriate. He commented that Jane Jacobs was very fond of mixed uses and asked if there were plans to incorporate additional commercial uses in this project. Ms. Dorf stated that a small amount of commercial space was planned and that there would be potential to add more if the demand was present.

Mr. Young commended the applicants on the proposed renovation of four historic buildings. He recognized that some demolition may be required, but that more information would be needed before the Board could act on the demolition of 1406 Pleasant. He suggested that the sash windows in the new construction should be taller and narrower and agreed with Mr. Chatterjee's objections to the circular windows. He suggested varying the location of the entrances to give variety and improve the rhythm of the streetscape and make each house more distinct. Ms. Dorf responded that she had investigated this option but concluded that changing the entryways would destroy the privacy of the rear courtyards. Mr. Young stated that varying set-backs were needed to give distinction to each house.

Mr. Kreider stated that the apron idea for Comers and Osborne Alleys could have merit but should be should be taken up with DOTE. He expressed his opinion that the demolition of 1408 and 1410 Pleasant acceptable due to the smaller scale and setback. Mr. Kreider said the building at 1406 Pleasant was more substantial and that he had some reservations regarding its demolition. Mr. Kreider suggested that the foundations of the new units be raised to limit the view from the street. He said that decorative security gates were preferable to more industrial ones that create a negative public perception.

### **ADJOURN**

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

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William L. Forwood  
Urban Conservator

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John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_